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California State Senate

MICHAEL J. MACHADO
SENATOR, FIFTH DISTRICT



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February 7, 2006

FEB 08 2006 00159

Mr. Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director
United States Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mr. Lester Snow, Director
California Department of Water Resources
1416 - 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Rodgers & Mr. Snow:

I am writing in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R) for the South Delta Improvements Program. The DEIS/R fails to adequately address the impacts of the project on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and further jeopardizes the entire Delta ecosystem.

Given the current state of the Delta and its environment, a strong effort needs to be made to reduce water diversions. Clearly, the DEIS/R does not consider this option. Recently the California Court of Appeals invalidated the environmental documents supporting the CALFED Record of Decision because of its failure to evaluate an alternative that would reduce Delta water diversions. Also, evidence, including the update of the California Water Plan, suggests that California's future water needs can be met without increased pumping. Experience shows that decreasing reliability on Delta water increases water supply reliability. A new alternative decreasing Delta water diversions needs to be developed.

The rapid and alarming decline of pelagic fish species in the Delta is not only a cause for concern but also indicates larger systemic problems. Investigations into the reasons for the collapse of these fish species are underway. However, the urgency with which SDIP is moving forward is worrisome, particularly because this project is specifically designed to increase pumping. It needs to be reiterated that there are issues associated with current pumping rates that have yet to be resolved. The SDIP does not address the existing problems; if anything, it potentially exacerbates them.

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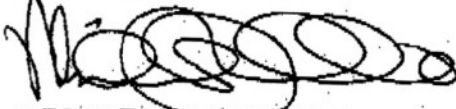
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There is no other place in the world quite like the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The state needs to manage it as the unique ecosystem that it is. Unfortunately, the SDIP DEIS/R fails to adequately consider alternatives to increased pumping nor the current status of the ailing Delta ecosystem.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and I strongly urge the re-evaluation of the construction and operation of the SDIP and its impacts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Machado', written over a horizontal line.

MICHAEL J. MACHADO
Senator, Fifth District

MJM:ks